

TRIBUTE TO ED KNIGHT AND C.J. BROWN

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 9, 2007

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the efforts of several individuals and groups in Boone, Iowa, for their contributions to the Muscular Dystrophy Association: Fire Chief Ed Knight and the Firefighters of Boone, and interim Wal-Mart manager C.J. Brown and Wal-Mart of Boone.

The Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) is a national voluntary health agency which is dedicated to conquering neuromuscular diseases and is funded almost entirely by individual private contributors. MDA seeks no government grants or fees from those it serves. Muscular dystrophy is not a specific disease, but actually a term that encompasses a variety of hereditary muscle destroying disorders that vary in inheritance pattern, age of onset, initial muscles attacked, and rate of progression. These muscle debilitating diseases affect over one million Americans including 560 families in Central Iowa and 38 families in Boone County.

The Boone Firefighters recently raised money for MDA through their annual golf tournament, and Wal-Mart of Boone generously matched the first \$1000 raised. I admire all the hard work and contributions made during this fundraiser to aid those who are stricken with this disease. It truly is a sign of the great compassion Iowans show to those in need.

It is a great honor to represent the Boone Firefighters and all the employees of the Wal-Mart of Boone in the U.S. Congress, and I know my colleagues join me in recognizing them for yet another job well done.

REDUCING RECIDIVISM RATES TO BETTER PROTECT OUR FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 9, 2007

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to urge that more be done to reduce the rates of recidivism in our Nation's swelling prisons. We must work—intelligently and compassionately—to better reintegrate former prisoners into our society, and the Second Chance Act of 2007 is effective on both counts. It intelligently saves taxpayer dollars and works to bolster public safety, investing resources in a consortium of services proven to keep ex-offenders on the right path. It compassionately addresses the prevalence of substance abuse and poor mental health in that group, and strives to strengthen broken families so that children may stand to benefit.

Our prison system is a revolving door, leaving many without the ample skill or support necessary to become productive members of society. It's why a staggering majority of state prisoners are released only to find themselves back behind bars at least 3 years later. An increasing number of formerly incarcerated citizens are without suitable education, physical and mental health, employment, or mentoring services—the kind this measure would assist in providing.

A central tenet of our criminal justice system is rehabilitation. We must not abandon that fruitful and moral imperative. About 650,000 people are released from prison each year, and it is incumbent upon us to take preventive measures for the sake of our communities and our children. We owe it to them to do far, far more.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 3222, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 8, 2007

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this FY 2008 Defense Appropriations Conference Report because it ensures that our troops get the protection they need and the benefits they have earned. Additionally, as an opponent of the decision to go to war in Iraq, and an advocate of the responsible redeployment of our combat forces, I appreciate that the contentious question of how Congress will proceed with the President's pending funding request for the Iraq War will be addressed in another legislative vehicle, on another day.

H.R. 3222 fully funds the increased personnel, equipment, and training costs associated with growing the Army and Marines by 7000 and 5000 troops, respectively. Moreover, and importantly, it allocates \$11.6 billion in emergency funding for Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles that are playing such an important role protecting our troops from deadly IEDs. And it responds to the historic strain on our National Guard and Reserves by providing an additional \$980 million to meet the equipment demands of their deployment overseas and first responder role at home.

In recognition of our military's service and sacrifice to country, this spending bill provides our military families with a 3.5 percent pay raise—.5 percent above the President's request. It rejects the President's proposed \$1.9 billion increase in premiums and fees in the TRICARE program and adds \$900 million to strengthen military health care for our servicemembers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. And it provides critical support to our military families through an infusion of \$237 million for counseling and child care, as well as \$615.7 million for facility and infrastructure upgrades throughout our bases in the United States, Europe, and Korea.

Finally, H.R. 3222 affirms American values by banning the use of torture while including important accountability measures for military and security contractors. It asks the DoD to include the entirety of its war funding in the President's 2009 Budget Request. And it meets important emergency needs in Louisiana and elsewhere as our fellow citizens continue the hard work of rebuilding their lives in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Mr. Speaker, this conference report is worthy of the broad, bipartisan support I expect it to receive.

HOMEOWNERS EXEMPTION UPDATE ACT OF 2007

HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 9, 2007

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, 1997 brought a presidential crisis, Slobodan Milosevic, and Princess Diana's death. It wasn't the greatest year, but it was the last time Congress managed to update the homeowners' exemption for the sale of a residence. It should not take more than five Congresses and over a decade to update the homeowner's exemption.

Since that time, the average value of an American home is up 104 percent. A \$500,000 home in 1997 would now cost over \$1 million. A decade later, middle-class homeowners in high-cost areas are handed a tax bill when they sell their homes because the home ownership exemption is still stuck at \$250,000 for individuals and \$500,000 for a couple.

What does \$250,000 buy for a growing family in today's market? Less than they need.

It is time to update the exemption for homeowners so that they are not pushed into higher tax brackets because Congress failed to update the law. That is why I am introducing the Homeowners Exemption Update Act of 2007, which raises the exemption to \$500,000 per individual and \$1,000,000 per couple.

Local leaders in Illinois are proposing more than ten new taxes of over \$1 billion. Today, this body passed a \$72 billion tax increase. Taxpayers deserve relief as the economy begins to slow, not a smattering of new taxes. My legislation eases the growing burden facing American families today.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and stand up for homeowners across the country.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LYNN A. WESTMORELAND

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 9, 2007

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Madam Speaker, I stayed at home due to an ongoing medical condition of a family member. As a result, I missed a number of votes. Had I been present, I would have voted the following:

"Aye" on Closing Portions of the Conference Report Making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008 (rollcall No. 1034)

"Aye" on a Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, as Amended National Heroes Credit Protection Act (rollcall No. 1035)

"Aye" on a Motion to Suspend the Rules and Agree to Recognizing the contributions of Native American veterans and calling upon the President to issue a proclamation urging the people of the United States to observe a day in honor of Native American veterans. (rollcall No. 1036)

"Nay" on a Motion to Table a resolution raising a question of the privileges of the House. (rollcall No. 1037)

"Nay" on ordering the previous question on a resolution raising a question of the privileges of the House. (rollcall No. 1038)

"Nay" on a resolution raising a question of the privileges of the House. (rollcall No. 1039)